

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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TAGS: PINT, UY

SUBJ: POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS CALL ON GOVERNMENT

TO PERMIT RENEWAL OF PARTY ACTIVITIES

REF: A) A-115

B) MVD 2447, AUG 9, 1973

1. SUMMARY: IN A LOGICAL FOLLOW-UP TO RECENT MOVES TOWARDS CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, MORE THAN 100 PROMINENT CITIZENS AND POLITICALS ISSUED A PUBLIC STATEMENT ON SEPTEMBER 1 REQUESTING THAT NORMAL PARTY ACTIVITIY BE PERMITTED TO RESUME. VIRTUALLY ALL THE SIGNERS WERE FROM THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES: REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FRENTE AMPLIO AND RADICAL LEFTIST GROUPS WERE NOT INVITED TO SIGN. EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS LIGHT, BUT FAVORABLE, BUT THE DECLARATION TOUCHED OFF CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC DISCUSSION. DESPITE THE GROWING MOMENTUM TOWARDS REFORM SINCE THE PRESIDENT'S JUNE 27 SPEECH, THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT STILL HAS NOT DEFINED ITS POSITON.

2. 108 PROMINENT URUGUAYANS, "CITIZENS AND MEMBERS OF DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PARTIES", ISSUED A DECLARATION  
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WHICH WAS CARRIED BY MONTEVIDEO LEADING DAILIES, THE COLORADO EL DIA AND THE BLANCO EL PAIS ON SEPTEMBER 1 (FULL TEXT BEING POUCHED). THEY NOTED THAT MORE THAN A YEAR HAD PASSED SINCE THE CLOSING OF THE CONGRESS, THAT THE PARTIES HAD DONE NOTHING TO DISTURB PUBLIC ORDER DURING THAT PERIOD, AND THAT THE COUNTRY WAS PEACEFUL. REFERRING TO THE EXECUTIVE'S DECISION TO PUSH CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM (REF A), THE POLITICIANS DECLARED THAT A NEW CONSTITUTION WOULD INCLUDE NORMS FOR POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITY AND ULTIMATELY WOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE PEOPLE IN A PLEBISCITE. THEREFORE, "...WE REITERATE THE CALL THAT FULL FUNCTIONING OF THE PARTIES, WITHOUT LIMITS OTHER THAN THOSE IMPOSED BY THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAW, BE AUTHORIZED."

3. THE ALPHABETICAL LIST OF SIGNERS WAS HEADED BY FORMER VICE PRESIDENT ALBERTO ABDALA AND INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MAJOR FACTIONS OF THE COLORADO (UNR, LIST 10, LIST 15, LIST 315, U Y R, AND INDEPENDENTS) AND BLANCO (POR LA PATRIA, NATIONAL BALNCO UNION, ROCHA, ECHEGOYEN, HEBER AND INDEPENDENTS) PARTIES, PLUS A FEW CONSERVATIVE CATHOLICS WHO HAD SPLIT FROM THE PDC, AND ONE NON-MARXIST LEFTIST. INCLUDED ALSO WERE A NUMBER OF FORMER CABINET MINISTERS AND ONE OF URUGUAY'S MOST DISTINGUISHED JURISTS, DR. JUSTINO JIMENEZ DE ARECHAGA.

4. COMMENT: THE DECLARATION WAS THE FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT BY POLITICIANS SINCE AUG 9, 1973 WHEN A GROUP OF BLANCOS AND COLORADOS WHICH CALLED ITSELF THE "DEMOCRATIC FRONT" CALLED FOR A PROMPT RETURN TO INSTITUTIONAL NORMALITY (REF B). THE DECLARATION IS A LOGICAL POLITICAL FOLLOW UP TO THE SEQUENCE OF MOVES TRIGGERED INITIALLY BY PRESIDENT BORDABERRY LAST JUNE 27 (REF A). REACTION HAS BEEN SLOW IN COMING. ONLY THE BATLLISTA EL DIA HAS COMMENTED EDITORIALY; IT GAVE FULL SUPPORT TO THE CALL FOR RENEWED PARTY ACTIVITY.

5. YET ANOTHER STEP ON THE ROAD TOWARDS CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM IS BEING ADVOCATED OPENLY WITH THE MILITARY STILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO BE HEARD FROM. WE KNOW THAT THE BORDABERRY SPEECH AND SUBSEQUENT STEPS TOWARDS REFORM TOOK THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT BY SURPRISE. NEVERTHELESS, MORE THAN TWO MONTHS HAVE GONE BY WITHOUT THE MILITARY HAVING SHOWN BY SIGNS OF EITHER RIDING WITH THE NEW WAVE OF DEBATE AND ACTIVITY OR TRYING TO STEM IT.

6. THE PRESIDENT'S ROLE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THAT OF A

CATALYST. AT LEAST THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION OF HIS HAVING MET WITH TRADITIONAL PARTY POLITICIANS IN RECENT MONTHS. PARTY PEOPLE HAVE TOLD US THAT THEIR PRINCIPAL GOAL IS RENEWED PARTY ACTIVITY WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A "WAY OUT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION." WITH RESPECT TO THE ACTUAL CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, NO ONE KNOWS HOW IT MIGHT BE HANDLED, NOT EVEN MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE COMMITTEE WHICH IS WORKING ON A DRAFT. HOWEVER IT GOES, THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES WANT TO BE PARTICIPANTS.

7. NO UNEXPECTEDLY, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FRENTE AMPLIO AND THE FAR LEFT WERE NOT INVITED TO SIGN. BLANCO AND COLORADO LEADERS ARE CONVINCED THAT THE MINOR PARTIES HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SUPPORT THE TRADITIONAL PARTY OF THEIR CHOICE. KNOWING THIS, TRADITIONAL PARTY LEADERS WERE NOT ABOUT TO JEOPARDIZE THEIR OWN STANDING IN THE EYES OF EITHER THE MILITARY OR THE PUBLIC BY BRINGING EITHER THE FRENTE OR OTHER POLITICAL GROUPS INTO THE FOLD AT THIS TIME.  
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